

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. An online system of locating consumer product having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline and inventory, comprising:

5 a locate client process operable to receive product configuration data and generate a search request message incorporating the product configuration data in response to user input;

10 an inventory database storing product availability data in the enterprise production pipeline and in inventory; and

15 a locate server process operable to receive the search request message from the locate client process and further operable to search the product availability data in the inventory database for products matching and substantially matching the product configuration data, the locate server operable to generate a search reply message containing the matching products and return the search reply message to the locate client process.

20 2. The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search request message and search reply message are XML messages.

25 3. The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search reply message comprises:

a list of products and respective configuration data; and

30 a percentage value for each product in the list indicative of the degree of matching between the product and the product configuration data contained in the search request message.

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a message client process operable to receive the XML document and convert to an XML search request message.

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13. The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

compiling a list of products and respective configuration data; and

5 providing a percentage value for each product in the list indicative of the degree of match between the product and the product configuration data contained in the search request message.

10 14. The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein receiving the search request message comprises receiving a list of search criteria and a weighting of each criterion.

15 15. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

receiving a search request document containing search criteria and converting to an XML document having a predetermined format; and

20 converting the XML document to an XML search request message.

16. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

25 displaying product configuration information to the user on a web page;

receiving product configuration selection from the user; and

30 displaying a search result list of product substantially matching the product configuration and percentage matching data on a web page.

17. The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

importing in-process product availability data from an enterprise database.

18. The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

10 incorporating product configuration data of each
substantially matching product; and

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25 generating a tag reply message confirming the
completion of tagging the identified product.

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21. The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising displaying an image of the product in response to receiving a user selection input.

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    sending the search reply message to the user.

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receiving the search request message on a
predetermined port;

searching the inventory database using the extracted vehicle configuration data.

27. The method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

providing a percentage value for each vehicle in the list indicative of the degree of match between the vehicle and the vehicle configuration data contained in the search request message.

29. The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:

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comprising:

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user; and
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comprising:

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an enterprise database; and

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generating the search reply message comprises:

substantially matching vehicle;

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descending degree of match between the vehicle and the vehicle configuration data in the search request message.

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33. The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:

receiving a tag request message submitted by the
5 user, the tag request message containing a unique vehicle identifier;

modifying the vehicle availability data associated
with the vehicle identified by the unique vehicle
identifier in the inventory database; and
10 generating a tag reply message confirming the
completion of tagging the identified vehicle.

34. The method, as set forth in claim 33, further
comprising suppressing the tagged vehicle from subsequent
15 search requests.

35. The method, as set forth in claim 30, further
comprising displaying a photographic image of the vehicle
in response to receiving a user selection input.

36. The method, as set forth in claim 30, further
comprising displaying detailed information associated
with a vehicle in response to receiving a user selection
input.

37. The method, as set forth in claim 30, further
comprising:

receiving a user selection input of a vehicle in the
list;

30 generating a search request message having an unique
vehicle identifier associated with the selected vehicle;

searching the inventory database for detailed data
associated with the unique vehicle identifier;

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receiving user online input on vehicle configuration, including make, model, and color of the vehicle;

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displaying the list of vehicles.

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        receiving an online user input selecting a vehicle
from the list of vehicles;

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40. The method, as set forth in claim 38, wherein displaying the list comprises displaying the vehicles in

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from the list of vehicles;

data on the selected vehicle;

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process.
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data on the selected vehicle; and

displaying the detailed data.

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receiving a search reply message including a pointer

to an image of the selected vehicle; and

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comprising:

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resource locator.

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